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## Afghanistan Situation Report

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10 June 1986

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT



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The Soviets signed a contract on 4 June with the Afghan regime to build the Sarowbi-II dam to increase hydroelectric power for the Kabul area.



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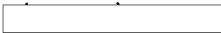
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Tensions between Afghan refugees and local residents are evident in Pakistan's Kurram Agency.



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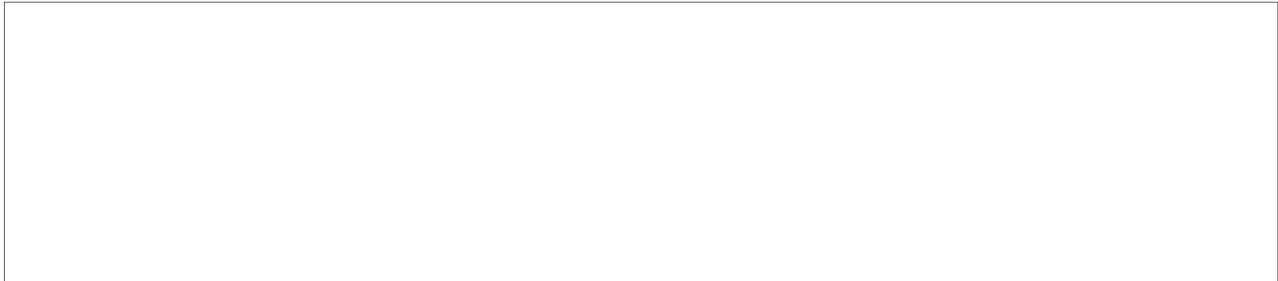
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Babrak Karmal's removal as General Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan continues to generate friction in the Parchami faction as his supporters clash with those of new party chief Najibullah.



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Soviet-Afghan forces have increased their control over the Kabul area by establishing security zones around the capital and making it difficult for the insurgents to operate in the city.

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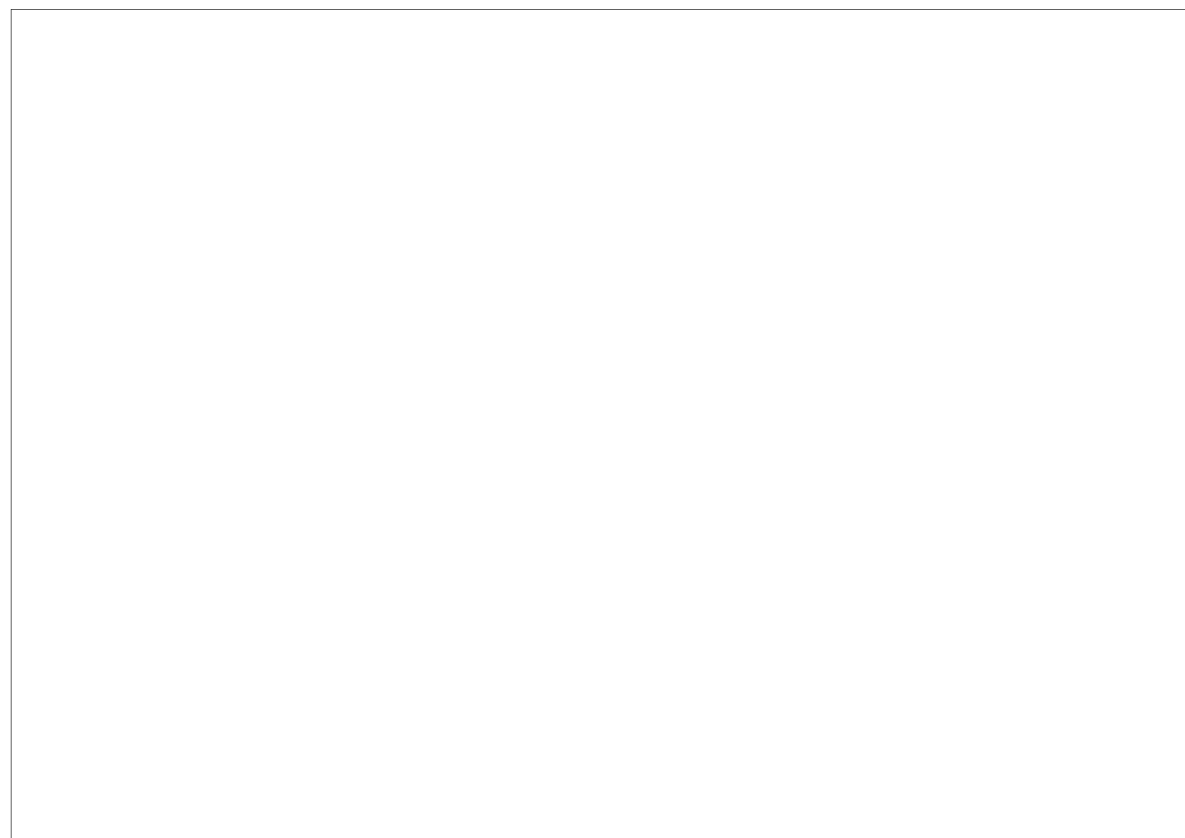
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**NEW AFGHAN-SOVIET ENERGY CONTRACT SIGNED**



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The Kabul regime signed a contract with the Soviet Union on 4 June for the construction of the Sarowbi-II dam, part of a project for hydroelectric power stations along the Kabul River. Under the terms of the agreement, the Soviet Union will provide specialists and equipment for the project and extend financial assistance through its long-term credit agreement with Afghanistan. The dam is scheduled to be completed in 1987-88. 

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**COMMENT:** To alleviate Afghanistan's chronic shortages of electricity, a large portion of Soviet economic aid has been allocated to the development of power generating facilities. Sarowbi-II's output will be hindered by periodic and severe water shortages. Such shortages, as well as insurgent attacks on facilities, have limited the effectiveness of Kabul's existing hydroelectric plants. 

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## REFUGEE RELATIONS WITH PAKISTANIS STRAINED IN NWFP

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Tensions between the predominantly Sunni Afghan refugees and local Shia tribesmen continue in the Kurram Agency, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]. The refugees now outnumber the native Pakistanis, and a delegation of local residents [REDACTED]

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wanted the refugees to go elsewhere. A number of Pakistanis resent the competition of Afghan refugees in the transport and retail industries, and blame them for the sharp rise in housing, food, and fuel prices.

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**COMMENT:** The economic impact of the 2 million refugees has been blunted somewhat by foreign aid, but the assistance does not compensate for damage to the environment or the burden on the local social services and the transportation network. Even though most unskilled Afghan do not directly compete with Pakistanis for jobs, and there is still room in the transportation and retail industries for local businessmen, Pakistani officials are concerned about growing resentment toward the refugees. Assertions by the Pakistani Government that it is working toward the repatriation of refugees may continue to partially appease NWFP residents, but Islamabad will remain sensitive to the political ramifications of the Afghans' presence. [REDACTED]

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## GROWING FISSURES IN THE PARTY

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The removal of Babrak Karmal as General Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) is continuing to foster unrest in the party's Parchami faction. [REDACTED]

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forces loyal to the new party head, Najibullah, arrested more than six hundred Babrak supporters in the party and the army in Qandahar city in mid-May. Members of the pro-Babrak group reportedly tried to defect to the resistance. [REDACTED]

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The US Embassy in Kabul reports that Najibullah is traveling under heavy guard. An unconfirmed press

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report claimed he had been wounded by Babrak supporters last week. Babrak Karmal made the annual speech at the Eid celebration on 7 June. He appeared haggard and worn. [REDACTED]

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**COMMENT:** The opposition to Babrak's removal may have forced Moscow to keep him in his largely ceremonial post and in the public view. Najibullah has moved quickly to clamp down on dissent but plans to move forward with Afghan parliamentary elections--presumably to bolster the regime's claims to legitimacy prior to resumption of the UN-sponsored peace talks on 30 July--might be delayed because of the infighting.

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## IN BRIEF

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construction at the helicopter airfield at Bost in Helmand Province is continuing. The new ammunition storage area is completed, and pierced steel planking has been placed on ten helicopter hardstands and the taxiway. Eight additional hardstands were still being graded. Prior to the renovation of the airfield

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The completion of the first stage of the Afghan media project was recently announced at a press conference sponsored by a German Bundestag representative. According to the US Embassy in Bonn, about 60 Afghans will undergo four weeks of training in operations and maintenance of portable video equipment. Squabbling among insurgents at the conference undercut the public presentation of the project.

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A three-person medical team has left Switzerland for Afghanistan, according to the US Embassy in Bern. The team evidently plans to operate in areas where medical assistance is now unavailable. It is receiving funds from a political institute in Bern. This is the first reported instance of private Swiss aid to the Afghan insurgents.

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**PERSPECTIVE**

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**FORTRESS KABUL: SOVIETS AND REGIME FORCES CONSOLIDATE CONTROL**

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Soviet and Afghan Forces have slowly increased their control of the Kabul area over the past few years. They have established security zones around the city and nearby military areas, hampering insurgent efforts at infiltration. Some 28,000 Soviet and 20,000 Afghan military and paramilitary troops are stationed in the capital itself, providing Kabul with the highest concentration of military forces in the country. Periodic combat sweeps have virtually depopulated areas south of Kabul where insurgents had previously had a major presence and hindered guerrilla operations elsewhere near the city. Insurgent forces are still active in the capital, but operations have become more difficult because of the Soviet and Afghan regime defensive measures.

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The insurgency in Kabul is now restrained by comparison with previous levels of activity. In 1983, improved cooperation among guerrillas operating in Kabul enabled them to launch coordinated attacks on the Bala Hissar Fortress, the Microrayon housing complex, and even Radio Afghanistan in the central city. Assassinations and attacks on facilities occupied by regime and Soviet officials were more common. Moreover, the number and intensity of rocket and mortar attacks on the city were greater and the frequency of the attacks more regular.

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**Ring Around Kabul**

Although the preponderance of Soviet and Afghan military forces in Kabul has been a major factor inhibiting guerrilla attacks in the city, defensive measures have been decisive in helping to keep the insurgents at bay.

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a series of small outposts now guard the southern approaches to the capital. One of these, in the Monaray Ghar mountains

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overlooking the Masa'i Valley, can be reached only by helicopter and is equipped with heavy mortars to harass guerrilla forces in the area, [REDACTED]

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In conjunction with the lookout points, the Soviets have created a virtual "no-man's land" to the south of the city. [REDACTED] houses within 500 meters of key sections of the Kabul-Gardeyz road have been destroyed and that most of the villages have been bombed or shelled. As a consequence, the southern Masa'i and the Sorkh Ab Valleys are now almost completely depopulated.

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[REDACTED] patrol activity by Afghan and Soviet forces creates de facto defensive rings around the city. The inner ring comprises Soviet troops patrolling in tanks and other armored vehicles; the middle zone is guarded by Afghan forces; and the outer area is covered by Soviet helicopter forces. [REDACTED]

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Besides measures to protect ground installations in the Kabul area, the Soviets have also increased precautions to protect air operations from insurgent air defense missiles. Beginning in late 1984, aircraft using Kabul International Airport started flying evasive maneuvers on takeoffs and landings. The maneuvers included sharp banking turns and steep ascents and descents over the city to avoid low-altitude flights over the hills around Kabul, from which insurgents have fired at aircraft. Military aircraft using the airport have employed flares to deflect heat-seeking missiles. Additionally, the Soviets now use MI-24 Hind attack helicopters to escort transport aircraft in and out of the zone of greatest vulnerability near the airport.

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### The Insurgent Threat to Kabul

Insurgents from six of the seven member groups of the insurgent alliance still conduct occasional operations in and around Kabul. The Hizbi Islami (Gulbuddin) probably is the most active and effective, followed closely by the Jamiat-i-Islami and the Hizbi Islami (Khalis), [REDACTED]

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Guerrillas in southern Kabul and the Masa'i Valley areas seem to be adequately supplied with food and weaponry, although there are some reports of shortages of heavy weapons ammunition.

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**Guerrilla Activity Limited But Not Eliminated**

The insurgents who target Kabul have had to modify some of their tactics as a result of the improved defenses in the capital area. the guerrillas have been forced to relinquish their permanent campsites in the mountains and canyons. They have formed small, mobile "committees" that use abandoned houses for shelter, cache heavy weapons until needed, and frequently change location. Their base camps are situated in the mountains at extended distances from Kabul.

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Insurgent forces remain able to attack targets in the Kabul area, although the overall level of their activity is reduced. Both the Hizbi Islami (Gulbuddin) and the Jamiat-i-Islami groups conduct sabotage and assassination operations in Kabul. They engage in night harassment attacks, using rockets and mortars fired from long range. small teams of insurgents infiltrated the capital's defenses in early May 1986 to fire recoilless rifles, machineguns, and light mortars at Kabul Airport and a Soviet barracks near a communications site. The US Embassy in Kabul reported in April 1986 that a spate of

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bomb explosions in the city prompted an increase in patrols and manning of checkpoints in the city. [REDACTED]

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The guerrillas also are better able to inflict damage on Soviet and regime forces on the periphery of the capital's defense. [REDACTED] the insurgents are strong in the southern reaches of the Masa'i Valley and that they lay mines and mount ambushes against forces traveling on the main road there. Because of the absence of outposts on the road south of the Masa'i Valley, Soviet and Afghan forces that travel the road employ heavy convoy security, including armored vehicles flanking the route out to a distance of three kilometers and attack helicopter escorts. [REDACTED]

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### **Outlook**

Soviet and Afghan regime forces will continue efforts to curb insurgent activity in Kabul. Major outbreaks of insurgent activity in the capital in the past have embarrassed the regime, and the government would like to have a pacified capital to back up its claims to legitimacy. [REDACTED]

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At the same time, the insurgents can not be completely prevented from operating in Kabul. The guerrillas have demonstrated that they are skilled at taking advantage of lapses in Soviet and regime security routines. For example, there are some indications that the insurgents have used knowledge of patrol schedules by Soviet helicopters to determine the timing of their own operations. Reports by the US Embassy in Kabul have suggested that security precautions often slacken when antiregime activities in Kabul decline, and the relaxation of procedures can be productively exploited by the guerrillas. The dropoff in patrol activity at night by Soviet forces also permits insurgent infiltration, in our view. [REDACTED]

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But for the insurgents to maintain their current overall level of activity in Kabul, they will have to further refine their tactics and operations. In light of intensified regime efforts to penetrate and disrupt guerrilla organizations, improved security will be essential to sustain successful operations. The guerrillas probably will also have to continue to improve training and increase discipline and coordination among attack groups. Moreover, because of the extended Soviet and regime perimeter around Kabul, the insurgents probably will have to rely less on rocket and artillery attacks to demonstrate that the regime's control of the capital is not yet complete.

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